

***A Report on “Need Assessment on Livelihood Skills
Developments and Technological Up gradation”***

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1. Introduction:

A half day visit was initiated in Beguntila Slum of Mirpur, Dhaka. The key objectives of the visit were:

- To observe the present situation of the home-based workers living in Beguntila slum
- To see and understand the livelihood condition of the home-based workers
- To understand the need of technological skill upgradation of home-based workers in the slum

2. Present Scenario of the Slum :

Beguntila is situated northern part of Dhaka. This slum is not under Dhaka City Corporation. At the moment 300 families living in the slum in this private owned land. Each of the slum dwellers has purchased one tin shaded room for each families paying 3000 taka. Each family 6-9 member is living at the moment.

i) ***Work and Occupation:***

90% of the family living in this beguntila slum is home-based workers. These people are non-Bengali bihari population who has been living in Dhaka from liberation war. Karcupi is the traditional work which has been adopted from their ancestors. Most of the home-based workers earn 500-1000 taka out of this profession. They are the piece rate workers whose work solely depends on the mercy of the middleman. They basically do karcupi (embroidery) work in the saree , shalwar kamiz, sandals etc. It takes a week to finish karcupi work in the saree. Each of the saree manufacturing cost 700-1000 taka and 4-5 workers work for one saree. So the profit of the payment is always shared by the workers.

Basically the mode of payment depends on the amount of karchupi design and quality of work in the saree. Mahajan or the middleman gives orders to these home-based workers where they sell the product in the big shopping outlets. The *mahajan* gets 7000-12000 taka out of these products. So, most of the profit share of the product goes to the pocket of the middleman.

The finished work is collected by the middle man. Sometimes the workers also deliver the work directly to the middleman.

It has been also learned from the workers that it is difficult for them to communicate or to delivery work to the big shopping outlets. Though some of the workers have direct connection with the shopping outlet but they cannot take orders for lack of management of the raw materials, lack of storage facilities, work force. They also felt that they could become organized or start cooperatives together this problems can be solved.

ii) Basic Amenity Facilities :

Presently there is no water, electricity or gas available in the area. As the home-based workers are living in a private owned land which is not under Dhaka City Corporation they do not have proper document to avail the basic amenity facilities at the moment. Though they are living in Bangladesh for quite a long time but they do not have national identity at the moment. Most of the dwellers living in the area are getting electricity illegally where they have to pay 50 taka per day for one light and fan which cost higher than the normal rate of the city corporation.



Picture: Sewerage system of Beguntala Slum (Picture taken by Sareeta Haidar)



Picture: Home-based workers room in Beguntala Slum (Picture taken by Sareeta Haidar)

ASA. Even the slum dwellers get water within this time. It has been learned from the dwellers that each family fetches up to

2-3 bucks of water for their daily household chores including washing and bathing. This is very insufficient for them. There is a wet land adjacent to the slum development area where some times the people take bath and wash cloths.

There is no cooking gas facility for the people inside the slum at the moment. The people have to rent gas cylinder for cooking which cost higher than usual.

The law and order situation of the people is very fragile in the slum. It has been learned from the dwellers that they have been threaten by the goons in the locality for money.

iii) Health and Sanitation:

Health and sanitation situation of this area is quite vulnerable. The slum is situated on a wetland. Open dumping of waste is a regular issue in this wetland. All the household waste including human feces directly comes to the open wetland. However, it has been observed that, the people also washing and bathing in this water as they have regular scarcity of water in this area. So the health and hygiene is a major concern in this area at this point.



Picture: Tin shed house of Beguntila slum of Mirpur

Tin shed houses are situated near by public clinic and some of them goes to the private clinics . The private clinic charges 100-500 taka for each visits excluding medicine. Fever, cold, skin disease, dihorreah, gastric, head aches, back pain, malnutrition etc are the health related

problems at this point. It has been said by the locals that the health facilities are very high and beyond their affordability. As the slum is not under city corporation they do not get any facilities from the Government.

Most of the home-based workers living here are suffering from occupational health problems like severe headaches, back pains, eye irritation. They only avail the electricity for few hours but in the evening time and at night there is no electricity. They use traditional lamp for lighting up where most of the workers work under this light which causes eye problems. It is very hard for the home-based workers to deliver work on time as most of them cannot work at night time due to lack of electricity.

Basically environmental degradation is a major concern in Beguntila slum at the moment. As the slum dwellers are living in an illegal and abandoned area of Mirpur there is no concern or facilities intervene in such setting.



Picture: Sewerage line cuts through the heart of the Beguntila Slum. The sanitary waste is disposed into the open wet land.

- iv) Education:**
There is no education facility in this area. Most of the adolescents living in here are also engaged in home-based works. One of the home-based workers said that his children are going to BRAC School for studying.

Most of the home-based workers in this locality can only write their names and can give signatures. The highest education level of the locality is up to primary level.

v) *Training related to work and Livelihood Skill Developments and Technological Up gradation :*

The home- based workers in the slum do not have any professional training on their work; they have learned the skills from their families and neighbors. Other than the karchupi work the workers made jute bags, paper bags, do tailoring work etc. They felt the strong need to learn tailoring as it has high demand on the market. It has been informed by the locals that at the moment karchupi work have a huge demand in the shopping outlets and in the community, so their concentration of work is more in this sector. But one or two of the home-based workers have expressed their demand on learning new designs and techniques which will help them to earn more money. At the moment they are only taking the orders from the middleman to complete their work.

They have also expressed the need to purchase new machines for the people who do tailoring work. Many of the home-based workers do not take orders and give delivery on time for lack of sewing machine. Purchasing raw materials and accessories for the product is also another concern for the workers as some of them have to purchase all these.

vi) *Recommendations:*

- It has been informed by the local home-based workers that, they have a strong need for storage facilities of their products especially in the rainy season when the area gets inundated by water. So, establishment of warehouse in the community is very important at this point.

- The production cost of the products is higher than the actual payment of the workers. They are deprived of right wages at the moment. So, formation of MBOs, getting organized can help them to solve these problems.
- Innovation in work in terms of design, techniques and quality is important. These workers do not have any linkages with the market and big shopping malls. Linking these people with SABAH trade facilitation centre in Bangladesh in future could help them to solve the above mentioned problems.
- Some of the workers having good connections with the shopping outlets but they cannot take huge amount of work orders from the suppliers due to lack of storage facilities, enough funding, and manpower with proper skills. Leadership development and organizing training is very crucial for the home-based workers to overcome such obstacles. It is also important to find the scopes for taking loan for the home-based workers in low interest rate so that they can start their own business.
- Some of the workers have the need of swing machines for tailoring work. Even if they have the skills they could not earn more money from tailoring for lack of machine. Formation of MBOs, self help group, cooperatives, and loan facilities can help them arrange funding for purchasing machine.
- The people of Beguntilla slum is suffering from basic amenity issues. Linking them with city corporation schemes and UPPRP schemes of Government of Bangladesh is also can solve the problem.